(c) The details of persons killed/injured by Redline and blue line buses are as under :

Year	Persons Killed		Persons injured	
	Redline	Blueline	Redline	Blueline
1993	260	30	830	56
1994	214	15	887	83
1995	298	14	931	33

(d) The reasons of such accidents are reckless driving, overspeeding, over crowding etc.

(e) and (f). Comparative figures of accidents involving Redline, Blueline and DTC buses are as under .

Year	No. of accidents		
	Redline	Blueline	DTC
1993	955	20	371
1994	920	62	242
1995	1029	43	169

(g) The steps being taken/proposed to be taken are given in the enclosed statement

STATEMENT

Steps being taken/proposed to be taken to minimise road accidents, misbehaviour and over-charging by private buses

1. Refresher courses/proficiency tests have been made mandatory for all drivers of public service vehicles.
2. Installation of speed governors in public transport buses
3. Action under Section 86 of M V Act against buses involved in accidents and/or violating permit conditions
4. Action against operators on complaints of misbehaviour and over-charging
5. Strict and rigid enforcement of traffic rules and regulations.
6. Regular special drive against rash and negligent driving driving without driving licences drunken driving defective headlights over-speeding over-loading etc
7. Regular protection of violators through issues of notices
8. Introduction of blinkers/signals at accident prone areas
9. More Police presence in accident prone areas
10. Special morning drives and night mobile patrolling
11. Painting of bus boxes yellow boxes.
12. Special night checking on Highways
13. Special drive against buses HTVs TSR, Taxis, etc against traffic violation

Central Assistance to Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council

313. SHRI R.B. RAI : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) the total amount of Central (Special) assistance allocated to the Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council and funds released during the last three years;

(b) whether the funds were released after receiving proper utilisation certificates; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE AND MINISTER OF COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM) . (a) The Government of India does not allocate Special Central assistance to the Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council directly. However, the allocation and releases of the funds under Hill Areas Development Programmes are made to the Government of West Bengal annually The Hill Areas Development Programmes in West Bengal are implemented by the Government of West Bengal Development works implemented by the activities and the others as non-transferred activities The Government of West Bengal releases the funds received from Government of India under Hill Areas Development Programme to those implementing agencies separately Details of allocation and releases under Hill Areas Development Programme (HADP) during the last three years are as under

(Rs in crores)

Year	Allocation	Release
1993-94	20.61	20.61
1994-95	20.61	20.61 *
1995-96	22.23	22.23 **

* This includes Rs 10.31 crores released in 1995-96 as arrears

** Includes Rs 11.12 crores released in 1996-97 as arrears

(b) and (c) Release from year to year under HADP are made on the basis of certificate from the Government of West Bengal that the amounts already released have been placed at the deposal of the implementing agencies

Central Excise on Cigarettes

314 SHRI SOMJIBHAI DAMOR Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state

(a) the quantum of Central Excise Duty collected from the cigarettes of below 60 mm length after the downward revision of Excise Duty, and

(b) the impacts thereof noticed on the growth of Beedi Industry?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE AND MINISTER OF COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM) : (a) As per the reports received from the Central Excise Commission-erates, the central excise duty collected from cigarattes, other than filter cigarettes, of length no exceeding 60mm, for the period 1994-95 and 1995-96 (upto December) is as given below (provisional),

1994-95	Rs 44 crore
1995-96 (up to December)	Rs 67 crore

The revenue does not include excise duty collected on cut tobacco used for the manufacture of cigarettes.

(b) Excise duty on biris falling under sub-heading No.2404.39 of the Central Excise Tariff continues to be at Rs 5 per thousand biris (basic+additional excise duty) since 1993-94 The excise duties (Rs in crore) realised (which is an indicator of production trend) from biris since 1993-94 is as given below

1993-94	207
1994-95	208
1995-96	208 (Provisional)

[Translation]

Foreign Exchange Reserves

316 PROF RASA SINGH RAWAT Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state

(a) the position of foreign exchange and gold reserve in the country presently.

(b) whether the Government have assessed the foreign and internal loan liability of the country and if so, the details thereof,

(c) the policy of the Government for decreasing the foreign loan and mobilisation of capital by promoting national sources; and

(d) the efforts being made by the Government for making tax-collection more effective and strong?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE AND MINISTER OF COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI P CHIDAMBARAM) (a) India's forex reserves comprising foreign currency assets, gold and SDRs as on July, 5, 1996 are given below

	(US $ Million)
Foreign currency assets of the RBI	17 743
Gold holding of the RBI	4,437
SDRs. holding of the Govt of India	11
Total	22,191

(b) The internal loan of the Government at the end of 1995-96 is estimated to be Rs 303359 crore The external debt of the country is estimated at Rs 318319 crore at the end of September 1995

(c) The Government lays considerable emphasis on mobilising internal resources to meet the investment requirements of the country The facilitate higher levels of investment and growth in the economy it is necessary to supplement the domestic savings with external resources The Government gives priority to mobilise non-debt creating flows by creating a favourable climate for Foreign Direct Investment

(d) Over the past five years a number of structural reforms covering both direct and indirect taxes have been undertaken Tax procedures have been simplified, rates have been lowered and greater buoyancy has been imparted into the tax structure These measures have started bearing fruits Also the share of direct taxes in the total tax collection is increasing because of these measures.

Fodder Machine

317 SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR GANGWAR : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) the present condition of the fodder machines (FOMETA) imported sometime back;

(b) the number of machines working at present their locations and if not working, the reasons therefor,

(c) whether any irregularity in this regard has come to light and

(d) if so the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE AND MINISTER OF COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI P CHIDAMBARAM) (a) to (d) 50 Fodder Machines and some spares had been imported free of duties, in terms of ad-hoc exemption Order No 103 87 dated 30 3 1987 by Sanjeevani Fooder Production Pvt Ltd to be donated to Bharat Krishak Samaj for demonstration and training purposes It was required that these machines will not be sold, transferred or disposed of for a period of 5 years

The importers appeared to have failed to observe the conditions stipulated for duty free clearance of the said machines, as perescribed in the exemption order These were later found to be either under the control of M.s Sanjeevani Fooder Production Pvt Ltd and their sister concern M.s Fometa India Machines Pvt Ltd or sold to Governments of Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh

The import of these machines has been adjudicated by the Commissioner of Customs Madras who, vide his Adjudication Order dated